

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Lafarge - North America

Alabama Technology Network

Lafarge North America Achieves Cost Savings

Client Profile:

Lafarge North America is a producer of bagged and bulk portland cement for residential, commercial and public works construction projects across North America. Lafarge's Roberta Plant, located in Calera, Alabama, produces Type I/II general purpose cement and five different masonry cements. This site also houses the largest limestone quarry that Lafarge owns one of the largest limestone quarries in the world. The Roberta facility employs 200 people.

Situation:

Processes in the Roberta Plant are automated and require extensive maintenance skills to maintain. In order to maximize the efficiency of the maintenance staff, training was needed in the specific area of general industrial maintenance skills. In addition, Lafarge's Plant Maintenance Training Team requested that a training program be designed to include computer aided design training and to prepare employees for certification as Maintenance Technicians. Increasing the company's number of Certified Maintenance Technicians was critical to its future growth and competitiveness. Lafarge contacted the Alabama Technology Network (ATN), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

In addition to providing general industrial maintenance skills, ATN provided the preparatory and design program to prepare plant employees to achieve certification as Maintenance Technicians. The ATN training program prepared each participant for all three levels of the International Maintenance Institute's Certified Maintenance Technician (CMT) exam. Utilizing the acquired knowledge and skills of these particular industrial maintenance employees has had positive contributions to the Lafarge strategic plan. This plan was designed to save downtime for the Roberta plant, thus creating cost savings through less rework and dependency on third-party contract resources. Due to the nature of the product being produced at the Roberta plant, equipment reliability is of significant concern. This means that employees participating in the CMT program should be able to repair equipment and also acquire the necessary skills needed to inspect and predict future issues with major equipment. As a result of these specialized skills, equipment downtime is expected to decrease by 10 percent, with a 5 percent increase in sales. Lafarge's Training Coordinator Randy Johns said, "We are already seeing the benefits of the specialized training. We have begun using our mechanical maintenance employees to perform specialized jobs in the plant previously reserved for contractors which has saved us approximately \$50,000 in contractor and labor costs."

Results:

- * Realized \$50,000 in cost savings.
- * Estimated impact of \$4 million in cost savings.

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Testimonial:

"The ATN-Hanceville Center has been professional and thorough in evaluating our maintenance technicians' needs from a training standpoint. They have also been helpful to us at evaluating what strengths and weaknesses our trainees have. We have begun using our mechanical maintenance employees to perform specialized jobs in the plant previously reserved for contractors. We could not have done this without the specialized training they have received in this program."

Randy Johns, Training Coordinator